

HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 11, 2014

1:00 p.m.

50 W. Gay St. – First Floor - Conference Room A

Applicants or their representatives must attend this hearing. If applicants are absent, it is likely that the application will be continued until the Commission's next hearing. If you have any questions please call Randy Black (645-6821) in the City's Historic Preservation Office. A Sign Language Interpreter, to "Sign" this meeting, will be made available for anyone with a need for this service, provided the Historic Preservation Office is made aware of this need at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing time. To schedule an interpreter, please call 645-8620 or TDD 645-3293.

Commissioners Present: Beth Clark, Abbie Faust, Robert Palmer (acting Chairperson), Tom Wolf

Commissioners Absent: Steward Gibboney, Dan Morgan, Charles Rowan

City Staff Present: Randy Black, Connie Torbeck, Christopher Lohr

- I. CALL TO ORDER (1:03 p.m.)
- II. SWEARING IN OF CITY STAFF
- III. IDENTIFICATION OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT
- IV. SPECIAL MEETING IN ACCORDANCE WITH CITY CODE AND COMMISSION BYLAWS

City Code Chapter 3117.04 Historic Resources Commission Organization: Duties.

The duties of the historic resources commission shall be as follows:

- L. To provide for regular and special meetings to accomplish the purposes of paragraphs A. through K. herein. (Ord. 1045-98 § 9; Ord. 0946-04 § 7; Ord. 897-05 § 7.)

Historic Resources Commission Bylaws: ARTICLE VI (1): Meetings

- D. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by the written request of five members of the Commission. The purpose of the meetings shall be stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least three days notice shall be given by the Secretary of the HRC to each Commission member and to the City Clerk.

- V. SUBJECT OF REVIEW
 - Rental Signage in Historic Districts

SYNOPSIS:

- Historic Preservation Officer, Randy Black, reviewed the background history regarding the review of rental signage in historic districts, as follows:
 - *In response to ongoing concerns voiced by property owners and residents, a Historic Preservation Office staff survey of existing commercial signage installed in the historic districts was conducted in late 2012.*
 - *At the February 21, 2013 H. R. C. meeting, a motion was made directing the H. P. O. staff to schedule a meeting to review and confirm commission sign review procedures and standards in historic districts with the H. R. C. subcommittee members to be identified.*
 - *At the June 21, 2013 H. R. C. meeting, a motion was made adopting a draft 'For Rent' signage policy for all historic districts and properties subject to Historic Resources Commission review and approval as required by City Code Chapters 3116 and 3117. Based on the discussion with concerned property owners and Historic Preservation Office staff research, the commission established a subcommittee to work with the Historic Preservation Office staff to finalize a signage policy language subject to final approval by the full commission.*

- *At the May 15, 2014 H. R. C. meeting the For Rent Signage Policy was adopted by the H. R. C. (see Attachment #2—For Rent Signage Requirements).*
- *May/June, 2014 Code Enforcement Officers issued letters and/or Code Orders to all property owners with signs installed prior to H. R. C. review and approval as required by City Code Chapters 3116 and 3117.*
- *The September 11, 2014 Historic Resources Commission (H. R. C.) Special Meeting was scheduled for discussion and analysis of signage standards for residences in historic districts.*
- Mr. Black noted that the overall goal is to establish uniformity of size, placement, and installation techniques for rental signage, in accordance with all applicable City Codes.
- Acting Chairperson, Palmer, opened the discussion, noting that the Commission is interested in hearing input from all property owners and property managers to assist the Commission in moving toward final action.
- The Commission and Historic Preservation Office staff think it would be appropriate and would best serve the public if the approval of rental signs in historic districts is established as an administrative approval by the Historic Preservation Office staff.
- Code Enforcement Supervisor, John Hughes, noted that there are currently approximately 100 rental signs posted within the four campus area historic districts (Northwood Park, Indianola Forest, Iuka Ravine, and New Indianola), and approximately 22 property owners.
- Property managers and neighborhood residents participated in a round table discussion. A general synopsis of comments is as follows:
 - In general, property managers stated that they are happy to conform to the final recommendations, when established.
 - Property managers stated concerns with vandalism to signs posted in the yard.
 - Property managers stated that they are aware it is important to attach signs to their building with fasteners inserted into mortar rather than into the face of brick.
 - Property managers stated concerns about a thirty-day limit for the posting of rental signs, and that tenant would have control over any signs posted on the interior side of a window.
 - Property managers noted that fire and police like to see the property managers contact information on a rental building.
 - Residents noted concerns about safety in a largely rental neighborhood. Noted preference to have rental signs placed in windows, not 24-hour advertisements as a rental neighborhood.
 - Residents noted that they appreciate how some rental properties are well maintained.
- One property manager asked if the signage for rental properties on High Street would be reviewed differently than commercial businesses on High Street.

- A resident noted that, unlike rental properties, commercial businesses are open to the public at specific hours.
- Residents noted that much information (regarding rental properties) is now available on the internet.
- One resident suggested a frame that could be left attached to the building, into which a rental sign could be easily inserted or removed.
- Commissioner Clark stated that it appears the major issues are 1) Where a sign may be placed, and 2) How long the sign may be left in place.
- Commissioner Faust noted that signs were not originally meant to be attached to a residential building.
- Commissioner Palmer asked the property managers if rentals tend to follow a certain pattern. The general response was that rentals take place throughout the year, as some students may graduate, leave school, or move to another location. Also, not all students graduate in the spring.
- In general, property owners stated that the wording, “For Rent,” is less important to them than having their business name and contact information posted.
- A resident suggested that perhaps a more subtle sign design could be developed and placed near the house address or mailbox.
- A resident noted that the size of the sign and the amount of information on the sign is what is important.
- Property managers voiced concerns about interested parties having to walk up onto the porch in order to read a sign. This would be a concern for tenants. The signs would need to be readable from the sidewalk.
- Mr. Black summarized that the next steps would be to consider the comments heard at this special meeting, develop strategies, and reach a final decision by the end of the year.
- A meeting is to be scheduled in October with the objective of developing the final signage policy for the historic districts.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT (1:57 pm)